

able creak of wooden wheels enlightened me I
 could not
 think what was approaching. Actually every
 village on
 these plains has one or more buffalo-carts,
 with wooden
 wheels without tires, and hubs and axles of
 enormous
 size and strength, usually drawn by four
 buffaloes. A man
 sits on the front of the cart and drives with
 a stick, and
 a boy *facing backwards* sits on the yoke
 between the two
 foremost beasts. He croons a perpetual song,
 and if this
 ceases the buffaloes stop. For every added
 pair (and on
 the next plain I saw as many as six yoke)
 there is an
 additional boy and an additional song.

This apparition carried a light wooden
 frame, which
 was loaded to a preposterous height with the
 strong reeds
 which are used to support the mud roofs,
 heavily weighted
 as these are with stacks of fodder.

One would think one was in the heart of
 the Bakh-
 tiari country and not on a caravan route,
 from the
 difficulty of getting any correct guidance as to
 the road,
 distance, safety, or otherwise, etc. Sharban
 has never
 been this way, and is the prey of every
 rumour. Be-
 tween his terror of having to "eat wood" on
 his return,
 and his dread of being attacked and robbed
 of his *yalus*,
 he leads an uneasy life, and when, as at
 Mehemetabad,
 there is no yard for his animals, he watches
 all night in
 the idea that the guards are the "worst
 robbers of all."
 I think he has all the Mussulman distrust of
 arrange-
 ments made by a woman! Hitherto the
 guards have
 been faithful and quiet. I always ask them

not to talk
after 8 P.M., and I have not once been
disturbed by
them; and when I walk as usual twice round
the camp
during the night I always find them awake by
their big
watch-fires.

The village Khan, an intelligent man, spent
some time
with me in the afternoon. The fields of his
village are
not manured at all, and the yield is only
about tenfold.